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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Fifth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING IN 1990

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 28 November 1990, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. KOUZNETSOV

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READEX

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 7)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Jordan (E/1982/3/Add.38/Rev.1) (continued)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Sharaf and Mr. Matalgah (Jordan) took places at the Committee table.

2. Mr. SHARAF (Jordan), replying to questions asked at the previous meeting, explained that education was given in Arabic in Jordan. English, and only English, was taught as a second language. Courses were also given in English at university - for example, in medicine and in linguistics.

3. Decisions on textbook publication and school curricula were adopted by a ministerial Programming Committee, which was responsible to the Higher Educational Council. Half the members of the Committee served on a voluntary basis, and they came from all walks of life. Each year, usually in March, the Committee decided which textbooks would be published during the summer and distributed free of charge to students in September. The Committee was assisted in its task - a complex one, as all students had to be taken care of - by numerous committees of teachers specializing in the various disciplines. The Committee's decisions thus reflected the diversity of Jordanian society. Every three years there was a nation-wide conference on education: the most recent had been held two years previously. Representatives of the United Nations or UNESCO, as well as foreign experts, could participate in the conference.

4. With regard to conditions for admission to university, he noted that the Higher Educational Council, which was answerable to the Ministry of Higher Education, worked to achieve co-ordination among the country's universities. Each university set its conditions of admission on the basis of the number of candidates and openings, applications from students, and other secondary considerations that were in no way intended to restrict access to university. Every year, the Higher Educational Council determined which qualifications candidates had to have in order to enrol in a given department. Candidates could apply to any number of institutions. The number of students was not restricted by quotas in the usual sense of the term. Each university could admit a certain quantity of students from Arab or foreign countries, but their number could not exceed 5 per cent of total student enrolments. At present, all the openings reserved for foreigners were filled by students from, inter alia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman and by Arab students whose families resided in Europe or the United States. In accepting foreign students, Jordan had found a way to express its gratitude to countries like Syria, Pakistan, the Soviet Union and others, which admitted numerous Jordanian students into their universities. Special courses - for example, in Arabic - were also organized for Jordanian students residing abroad.

5. With regard to Muslim fundamentalism in Jordan and the Djerach festival, he explained that Jordan was situated at the crossroads of eastern and western influences, and that Jordanian society was characterized by a spirit of openness. Foreigners could freely enter and work in Jordan, and Jordanians

could travel wherever they wished outside their country. In that context, the Djerach festival, of which Jordan was very proud, served as a showcase for a wide variety of cultural and artistic events from all countries of the world. Some individuals, who had the right to express their views, were opposed to the holding of the festival, but there was no reason to believe that they could ever stop it.

6. The Royal Scientific Society was an independent research institute deploying eminent specialists in the most diverse fields. It was financed by the Jordanian Government and by private Arab institutions.

7. Concerning the democratization of the school system, he said that the Jordanian educational system was traditional in nature, but that parent/teacher associations that convened regularly were involved in administrative decision-making. In villages where everyone knew everyone else, relations among teachers, administrative heads and parents were easily built up. In large cities like Amman, such relations were more difficult to establish, but transport and infrastructure were better, the staff was probably more highly qualified and parents' wishes could be expressed in other ways - for example, through the newspapers. There was a television programme during which private citizens could formulate criticism about public services, educational services, etc.

8. The phrase "cultural institutions", used in paragraph 44 of the report, was not really appropriate to describe the professional or commercial private educational estalishments mentioned in the Arab text. Those private establishments, which had become redundant as a result of the development of public education, were gradually disappearing.

9. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO explained that his question had been aimed at eliciting clarification on the relationship between the curricula and the procedure for preparing textbooks. The representative of Jordan had provided explanations on the procedure for establishing the curricula. Once that had been done, did individuals other than teachers take part in drafting the textbooks, and what sort of educational material went into the curricula?

10. Mr. ALSTON said he feared that he had not phrased his question clearly enough at the preceding meeting. He had wanted information on access to education, or the exercise of the right to education, of vulnerable groups - groups that, owing to their racial or ethnic characteristics, to disadvantages, or to their socio-economic situation, did not normally have the same access to education as did the rest of the population. In Australia, for example, the aborigines were the most obviously vulnerable group, but there were others as well, including immigrants from certain countries. Such vulnerable groups existed in all societies. The Committee was not looking for reasons to criticize, but wished to make sure that States parties were aware of the existence of such groups and were investigating ways of ensuring that they could exercise their rights.

11. Mr. SHARAF (Jordan), replying to the question raised by Mr. Wimer Zambrano, said that the Programming Committee provided guidance to another committee made up of experts, writers, specialists in various fields and retired educators and teachers, who served ex officio. That committee drew up the textbooks and finalized them in accordance with guidelines laid down by the Programming Committee. The content of the textbooks was reviewed every year.

12. Replying to Mr. Alston, he said that the Jordanian Constitution guaranteed equality to all in all areas, and Jordanian society had originally been a small, homogeneous and non-hierarchical one. It had not comprised any particularly vulnerable groups like the aborigines of Australia. There was no Jordanian race as such. Most Jordanians were Sunnite Muslims, but Orthodox Christians were also to be found in the population. There were groups that were disadvantaged socially and economically, but not on account of their race, social or ethnic origin or religious beliefs. Some population groups had been particularly hard hit by the effects of the economic crisis in the region. The country had only become aware of the problem of disabled persons in the past 10 years or so, largely through the efforts of leading families that had set up schools and special teams to meet the needs of the disabled - both those who could attend school and those who could not. In the past, it had been very hard for the disabled to receive education, and the drawback of inadequate earnings had often compounded their hardships. In general terms, the normal functioning of Jordanian society guaranteed access to education for all. The Government made teachers available to all villages that were prepared to build schools. Obviously, the functioning of society was modified in the event of social transformation or the disorganization of groups - for example, the exodus of nomads towards the towns.

13. Mr. RATTRAY inquired whether the Jordanian Constitution, which guaranteed the principle of equality, as Mr. Sharaf had clearly explained, permitted Jordanian citizens and others residing in the country to exercise the right to equality of opportunity in education. He would also like to know whether there was a difference in the quality of instruction as between private and public educational institutions.

14. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO requested information on the education of nomadic tribes, which were not always considered to be vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, even though their culture could not easily be reconciled with the general principles of development. He would like to know whether special educational programmes had been set up for them.

15. Mr. FOFANA asked whether there was a Kurdish problem in Jordan.

16. Mr. NENEMAN asked Mr. Sharif whether there were children of school age who did not attend school and, if so, what percentage of students that group represented. He also inquired about the requirements for obtaining scholarships: were they provided on the basis of students' grades or of their financial situation? Finally, he wished to know whether Jordan was able to make its own television programmes.

17. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO, referring to the provisions of the Education Act No. 16 of 1964 and the provisional Act No. 27 of 1988 that were quoted in paragraph 20 of the report, inquired what was meant by "They [Jordanians] are distinguished by the extent of their devotion and attachment to their society." She also asked whether political or religious dissenters were subject to any form of discrimination.

18. Mr. SHARAF (Jordan) replying to the question put by Mr. Rattray, said that certainly, private schools, for which tuition was charged, provided better quality education than did State schools. Yet parents were free to send their children to the educational instituion of their choice, and most Jordanian students went to State schools.

19. With regard to the question raised by Mr. Wimer Zambrano concerning nomadic tribes, he recalled that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, bedouin tribes had ranged where the Amman-Aqaba motorway was now located. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Jordanian Government had started to concern itself with their education: it was the only way to ensure the settlement of nomadic tribes. The Government had thus promoted the construction of schools along the motorway. A long-term programme for the settlement of the bedouin tribes had been launched 20 years previously: it had called for land distribution, well-drilling and school construction. The army had been the first to participate in those efforts by recruiting the bedouin, and educating and training them. Today, the bedouin school system was an integral part of the national educational system. Many bedouin were university graduates: he cited the example of the Minister of Health, who was of bedouin origin and had undertaken advanced studies in the United States. Today, it was difficult to distinguish a bedouin from a farmer - only the accent gave the bedouin away. The infrastructure built to promote the settlement of the bedouin had often turned into full-fledged small towns. Jordan was prepared to assist other countries in such efforts, on the basis of its experience.

20. Regarding the question raised by Mr. Fofana, he said that there were no Kurds in Jordan.

21. Replying to Mr. Neneman, he said he did not know the exact percentage of school-age children who did not attend school, but that he would transmit the information in writing to the Committee.

22. Scholarships were granted to poor or disabled students. The Jordanian educational system did not provide for scholarships to be granted on the basis of a student's marks. Nevertheless, the Government gave scholarships to the 10 boys and girls with the best results in examinations for the school-leaving certificate to enable them to study abroad. There were many other ways for their countrymen to assist young Jordanians in pursuing their studies. Students could ask for help from the university counsellor or apply for financial assistance from cultural centres and Islamic groups. Finally, the Shariah specified that every wealthy Muslim must contribute a certain amount of money each year to a good cause, such as education. Such facilities were part of Islamic culture, and there were no statistics on them. On the other hand, statistics did exist on scholarships, and he would provide them to members of the Committee.

23. With regard to Jordanian television, he explained that it had been introduced in 1968 with the technical assistance of a German company. During the 1970s, many Jordanians of both sexes had been sent abroad for training. For 10 years, the national television service had been staffed by Jordanians, and today, Jordanian television exported specialists, producers, actors and sound engineers to the Gulf States. At the beginning, Jordanian television had benefited from the assistance of the Egyptians, whose system had been more advanced, but the Jordanian system had subsequently become a training ground for Arab countries. Programmes were divided into three categories. First there were Jordanian programmes, including television news, for which Jordanians were entirely responsible: they were broadcast primarily in Arabic, three or four times a day. Then there were Arabic programmes, which were considered to be local programmes because they came from countries with

the same language and the same culture as Jordan. Finally, there were foreign programmes: Jordan had concluded 51 cultural agreements with other countries to import books, television programmes, etc.

24. Replying to Mrs. Jimenez Butragueño, he said that there was a translation problem in paragraph 20 of the report: the Arabic and English versions of the text differed. He gave his own translation of the article in question and explained that all Jordanians were equal: if some were better than others, it was because they were even more devoted to and attached to their society. Admittedly, the Arabic text was not very clear.

25. The CHAIRMAN thanked the Jordanian delegation for its participation, and Mr. Sharaf in particular for the clarifications he had given in response to the questions raised by members of the Committee.

26. Mr. Sharaf and Mr. Matalgah (Jordan) withdrew.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (agenda item 4) (continued)

27. The CHAIRMAN, referring to paragraph 29 of the report on the Committee's fourth session (E/1990/23), reminded experts that it had been decided that during the final phase of the Committee's examination of a report, members would be invited to offer any concluding observations they wished to make on the basis of all the information available to them. It had been agreed that, rather than taking place on the same day as the final set of replies by the representative of the State party, the final phase would be held at least one day later. Finally, it had been agreed that one or two members of the Committee, ideally not from the same region as the reporting State, would be requested to prepare concluding observations. That arrangement did not in any way preclude other members from making whatever concluding observations they wished. He announced that Mr. Fofana and Mr. Rattray had agreed to prepare the concluding observations on the report of Jordan, and he thanked them.

28. Mr. ALSTON said that, in conformity with the practice followed in several other bodies responsible for monitoring the implementation of human rights instruments, the Committee had decided, at its fourth session, that an individual member would be responsible for speaking first during the presentation of concluding observations on the report of a State party. The decision had been intended to make one member of the Committee feel particularly responsible for following the discussion on a given report and for preparing an evaluation of the report and the way in which it had been presented. That in no way prevented the other members of the Committee from offering their concluding observations, whether or not they concurred with those of the first speaker.

29. The Committee had agreed to designate as the first speaker a member who ideally was not from the same region as the reporting State, and it was essential that that principle should be respected. A member of the Committee who had to make the initial evaluation of the report of a State from his or her own region would be placed in a difficult position. The person designated should likewise not be the one who had borne the primary responsibility within the pre-sessional working group for preparing questions on the report under consideration. If those two criteria were acceptable to other members, he

believed the Committee should proceed to name those persons who would serve as first speaker during the presentation of concluding observations on each of the reports that it was to examine during the current session.

30. The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Alston's comments were most cogent. Mr. Fofana and Mr. Rattray should come to an agreement on which of them would speak first during the concluding observations on the report of Jordan. It would also be useful to consider who would speak first on each of the other reports, beginning with that of Luxembourg. He invited members of the Committee who were willing to prepare concluding observations on a particular report to say so.

31. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO said that, unlike Mr. Alston, he thought the member of the Committee who would speak first in offering concluding observations on the report, the comments and the responses of a State party should be from the same region as the State party, for two reasons. First, members of the Committee served in their personal capacity, and they were expressing their own opinions, not those of their Governments. Second, a person from the same region as the State party was better equipped than other members to make an appropriate assessment of the information provided in the report of the State party and by its representatives. He therefore suggested that in principle, a member of the Committee from the same region as the reporting State should be allowed to speak first during the stage of concluding observations.

32. Members of the Committee should also strive towards a certain uniformity in expressing their general opinions on the reports of States parties: in other words, in so far as possible, they should adopt a uniform "rating system".

33. The CHAIRMAN said that, notwithstanding the well-argued case put forward by Mr. Wimer Zambrano, he personally thought it preferable to retain the procedure decided on by the Committee at its fourth session, namely that the Chairman should request a particular member, ideally not from the same region as the reporting State, to be the first speaker during the concluding observations phase (E/1990/23, para. 29). However, since the word "ideally" appeared in the wording of the Committee's decision, other solutions were clearly not excluded.

34. Mr. ALSTON said that Mr. Wimer Zambrano's suggestion about adopting standard criteria for evaluation was interesting. However, the Committee should not take that idea to the point of awarding "marks" to States parties, since the reports were not really comparable. A rating system would mask differences in the nature of the reports themselves, the dialogue between the State party and members of the Committee and so on. Nevertheless, it would be possible to define criteria on the basis of which each member of the Committee, or at least the first speaker on the concluding observations, would evaluate the report, so that the first to speak would, for example, be required to indicate whether the report itself was adequate and whether the replies were satisfactory and to convey the general feeling of the Committee about the report concerned, as he perceived it.

35. Furthermore, while not opposed to a reopening of the discussion on the subject, he thought that generally speaking the Committee should adhere to the principle of not choosing as the first speaker an individual from the same region as the reporting State. It was essential that the Committee as a whole

should give an impression of objectivity. Experience showed that a member of the Committee from the same region as the State party could feel more vulnerable in the event of political pressure - however subtle and unofficial - being exercised to induce him to moderate the tone of his comments. It should not be forgotten that it was the regional group to which the expert's country of origin belonged which decided whether or not he should be selected as a candidate for a further term.

36. That having been said, it was clear that, as Mr. Wimer Zambrano had observed, an expert was better able to understand the structures and functioning of a State party if he came from the same region. For that reason, the option must be retained of appointing a second speaker from the same region as the reporting State who could draw the attention of the first speaker to any misconceptions.

37. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO said that it was essential to adopt a very flexible procedure in the matter. Clearly, if an expert who was requested to submit concluding observations on the report of a State from his region felt some hesitation about doing so, he should be excused. However, it should be recognized that, particularly in cases of countries with a very complex tradition, such as China for example, an expert who did not come from the same region as the country concerned was liable to make a very superficial judgement. Accordingly, although he did not fundamentally disagree with Mr. Alston, he thought that advantage must be taken of the knowledge that experts had of a particular region to enhance the discussion, questions and conclusions on the reports of States parties.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that he personally agreed that the Committee should adopt as flexible a method as possible, but, in his capacity as Chairman, he felt bound by the decision set out in paragraph 29 of the Committee's report on its fourth session.

39. Mr. MARCHAN ROMERO said that Mr. Alston's argument seemed to him just as valid as that of Mr. Wimer Zambrano. However, if the Committee opted for a flexible procedure, as Mr. Wimer Zambrano recommended, he would personally prefer, for practical reasons, to present the concluding observations on the report of a State party from his own region. He would feel more qualified to study the situation of economic, social and cultural rights in such a country than in any other State party. Naturally, the experts were all capable of formulating conclusions on the reports of States parties from regions other than their own, but that demanded more discipline and concentration and involved a greater risk of error. In his view, the impartiality of members of the Committee could not be questioned, since they had all repeatedly demonstrated that they adhered strictly to the principles of autonomy and independence.

40. In the light of what he had just said, he would be prepared to be the first speaker to make concluding observations on the report of a State party from his own region, although he was aware of the tenor of the decision adopted by the Committee at its fourth session.

41. The CHAIRMAN, in response to Mr. Marchan Romero's statement, said that, at its fourth session, the Committee had thought it would be preferable not to choose as first speaker for the concluding observations phase an expert from the same region as the reporting State. Nevertheless, nothing obliged it to

adhere slavishly to that procedure. The Committee could therefore ask Mr. Marchan Romero to indicate, when he deemed it appropriate, for which report from a State party in the Latin American region he wished to volunteer.

42. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO agreed that an expert from the same region as a State party could have a better perception of the problems of that State and consequently be better able to evaluate its report. Nevertheless she tended, like Mr. Alston, to think that such an expert might also have difficulty in putting the necessary distance between himself and the report concerned. Furthermore, if, at the current session, the task of being the first speaker on the concluding observations was entrusted solely to experts from the same region as States parties, the workload of experts from Latin America would be much heavier than that of their colleagues from Western Europe, for example.

43. Accordingly, she suggested the adoption of a system of collaboration under which the Committee member who volunteered to be the first speaker during the concluding observations might regularly count on the assistance and advice of another Committee member from the same region as the reporting State.

44. Mr. SPARSIS said that, on the basis of the decision adopted by the Committee at its preceding session, a list must be drawn up of the members of the Committee who volunteered to initiate the concluding observations on the reports submitted to the Committee at its current session. Naturally, if one of the experts on the list thought that, for any reason, he was unable to present the concluding observations on a particular report, he could be excused and replaced by another member. In that connection, it should be borne in mind that the views expressed by the first speaker did not necessarily commit the Committee as a whole and that other members of the Committee could make whatever concluding observations they deemed appropriate.

45. Mr. MARCHAN ROMERO supported Mr. Sparsis' proposal to draw up a list of volunteers. He was also in favour of Mrs. Jimenez Butragueño's proposal to appoint two members of the Committee to prepare the initial assessment which would be presented during the concluding observations phase. Although it should not be a hard-and-fast rule but rather a general guide, one of those experts should come from the same region as the State party concerned and therefore be able to advise the other in preparing his or her concluding observations. That solution would also have practical advantages in that the two experts could compare notes and obtain information that they might have missed during the discussion, in view of the speed of the proceedings.

46. Ms. TAYA said that, like Mr. Wimer Zambrano, she thought that the wording of the decision taken by the Committee at its fourth session did not exclude the possibility of selecting as the first speaker for the concluding observations phase a person from the same region as the reporting State. She recalled that, at the preceding session, she had performed that function for the reports of India and the Philippines.

47. Mr. KONATE said that he was very wary of "regionalism" in expert groups and thought that, if possible, it would be judicious to select as the first speaker an expert who was not from the region of the reporting State party. It was not necessary to be a leading specialist on a particular country to

examine its report, since members of the Committee arrived at a judgement on the basis of the evidence, in that they based their evaluation on the report and on the comments of States parties. On that basis, he would volunteer to be the first speaker during the presentation of concluding observations on the reports of Ecuador.

48. Mr. MRATCHKOV observed that Governments were rather sensitive to the views of the experts on the Committee, as was evidenced by the reaction of the Argentine Government to the Committee's concluding observations on its report. Under those circumstances, it would perhaps be judicious to make the observations more comprehensive and, for that purpose, to make several experts responsible for summing up the discussion on a given report. That would in no way preclude other members from giving their views on the matter. Specifically, the Committee might consider assigning the task not to five experts, as was the case in the pre-sessional working group, but to two or three members, one of whom would not come from the same region as the reporting State. Accordingly, he would volunteer to participate in drafting the concluding observations on the reports of Ecuador or on the Costa Rica report.

49. The CHAIRMAN said that it had never been intended to limit the number of experts making concluding observations and that the sole purpose of the decision taken on the subject at the preceding session had been to facilitate the Committee's task by saving it from doing all the work at a plenary meeting. He asked Mr. Mratchkov to prepare the concluding observations on the Costa Rica report.

50. Mr. RATTRAY said that he feared Committee members were attributing too much importance to the role that the expert more particularly responsible for concluding observations on a given report was called upon to play. According to the decision taken by the Committee at its fourth session, that person would merely be required to prepare and open the discussion on the matter and it was up to any member who did not share the views of the first speaker to take the floor during the discussion so that in the last analysis, the collective judgement of the Committee on the report under consideration emerged. Furthermore, two experts who might be entrusted with preparing the discussion jointly need not necessarily be of the same opinion. For his part, he reserved the right to give his views on the concluding observations on any State's report, quite independently, whether or not it belonged to the same region as he did.

51. The CHAIRMAN confirmed that everyone would have the opportunity to make his or her position clear when the concluding observations were established.

52. Mr. GLAIEL said it was unthinkable that experts elected to serve on the Committee for their personal qualities and their independence might be disposed in certain circumstances to turn a blind eye to shortcomings in a report. In any case, since the right of everyone to give his or her opinion was established, there was every reason for thinking that no one would refrain from taking part in the discussion, at the end of which the Committee would establish a definitive text on its concluding observations which would take due account of all the views expressed. If the Committee was really set on requesting one or another of its members to be the first speaker during the concluding observations phase, then the Secretariat should draw up a list of volunteers for that duty without further delay.

53. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the decision taken by the Committee at its preceding session on the matter of concluding observations left its members full freedom of action: in principle there was nothing to prevent an expert from the same region as the reporting State from being entrusted with preparing the discussion on the concluding observations concerning its report. He noted that the matter appeared to be settled already since several experts had volunteered for that task: Mr. Rattray and Mr. Fofana for Jordan, Mr. Konate for the two reports of Ecuador and Mr. Mratchkov for the consolidated report of Costa Rica. He understood that Mr. Neneman had agreed to prepare the concluding observations on the Luxembourg report and Mr. Alston those on the report of the Dominican Republic.

54. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO offered to be the first speaker during the discussion on the Iran report, provided that Mr. Glaiel assisted her in the task.

55. The CHAIRMAN requested Mr. Marchan Romero to be responsible for the concluding observations on the reports of Panama if the Committee decided to consider them at its current session.

56. Mr. MARCHAN ROMERO said that he accepted the task provided that Mr. Wimer Zambrano was prepared to help him with advice and that everyone could give his or her views.

57. Mr. ALSTON noted with satisfaction that the Committee had chosen a fairly flexible formula for establishing its concluding observations. However, the Committee should be on its guard against any disposition to adopt by consensus a set of concluding observations on a particular report: views within the Committee were too divergent for a possible consensus, which would be a sort of lowest common denominator, to have any validity. Personally, he thought he would find it just as difficult to reach a common position on concluding observations with an expert from the same region as the reporting State. In fact, the method of asking an individual member of the Committee to prepare the discussion on the concluding observations on a report and then of reflecting in the Committee's report the various points of agreement and disagreement, seemed to him to be the only acceptable solution. Furthermore, it had the advantage of making at least one of the Committee members reflect deeply on the report under consideration and deliver a more considered judgement on it without thereby preventing the other Committee members from making any comments they deemed desirable. In addition, it was easier for an expert who did not come from the same region as the reporting State to make a detailed and critical evaluation of the situation. Generally speaking, it was essential that the Committee should make more balanced and clear-cut judgements on reports, particularly when it was established that large-scale human rights violations had been committed in the reporting country: by making anodyne concluding observations as it had done on the Romania report, the Committee would dash the hopes of peoples whose rights had been trampled upon and discredit itself in the eyes of the world.

58. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO said that, in order to prepare concluding observations properly in a few days, it was both useful and quicker to have the insights of an expert from the same region as the reporting State. In her view, it was perfectly possible to receive assistance without allowing one's ideas to be dictated.

59. Mr. GLAIEL asked the Chairman to allay one doubt: would the concluding observations formulated by the expert or experts responsible for speaking first during the discussion in any way bind the Committee? If such was the case, why should the other Committee members take part in the discussion?

60. The CHAIRMAN said that, as in the past, the expert or experts appointed would draft what were seen to be the main points of the concluding observations to be made on the report concerned. They would submit those points for consideration by the other members of the Committee, who would give their views, whereupon the expert or experts concerned would draw up the definitive version of the observations which would reflect the collective views of the Committee and not their own views. The Committee was in no way bound by the first draft.

61. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO said he entirely agreed with Mr. Alston that the Committee should be more forceful in its concluding observations. However, he did not see why the Chairman should not ask two or three experts to prepare draft concluding observations on a particular report, since the draft would be submitted for consideration by all the experts and amended in the light of the views expressed, before being regarded as constituting the opinion of the Committee.

62. Mr. NENEMAN said he was utterly opposed to the idea of entrusting a single expert with responsibility for initiating the discussion on the concluding observations concerning a particular report. Truth sprang from a multiplicity of views and it was only if at least half the members of the Committee spoke on a particular report that the Committee could hope to reach concluding observations which were well balanced and as objective as possible.

63. The CHAIRMAN stressed that it was precisely the task of the expert or experts with particular responsibility for the concluding observations on a given report to take a cross-section of all the views expressed by members of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.